

Student As Curator

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Student As Curator: Exhibition Methodologies Expanded + Reimagined

7-29 May 2015

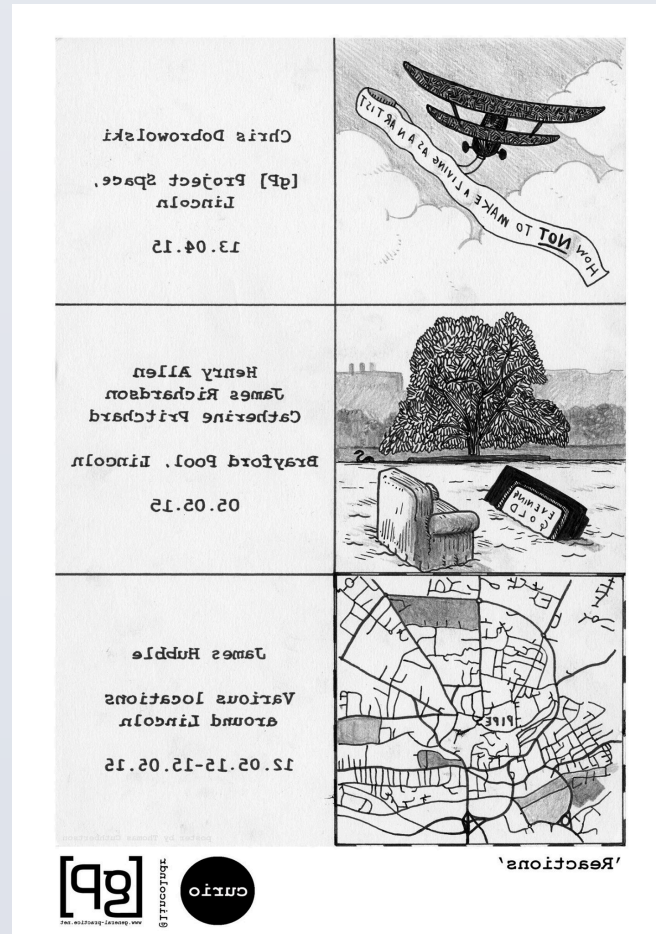
Brief

The bending of structures and perhaps more importantly boundary blurring, are recognised as essential aspects of contemporary art practice and of learning and teaching - especially within the creative arts. It is associated with a shift in the 'fixity' of the relationship between artwork, site and audience; between process, product and commodification/marketisation (Shepley 2008; Rose 2007: 13 & 22; Onorato 1997: 13).

In Semester 2 (2015) MA Curatorial Practice Students worked with MA Fine Art staff and guest artists to curate three specifically sited projects in the City of Lincoln funded by the Educational Development and Enhancement Unit, University of Lincoln.

Through discussion with staff each curator produced a project within the city which included at least one external artist from outside the region whose work was of particular relevance to their chosen theme. Each project also provided opportunities for Undergraduates from the BA (Hons) Fine Art programme to be involved. Each project was fully researched and documented, they all included a blog and were aimed at increasing audience engagement.

1. **Danielle Bastiaens: Purdah Press** was a collaborative project between Danielle, MA Fine Art student Patricia Ferguson and MA Design student Rianne van de Rijt, to distribute contemporary art in the form of a newspaper. This publication contained the work of nine invited artists each making work in response to notions of democracy: Holly Bowler, Thomas Cuthbertson, Patricia Ferguson, Mustafa Hulusi, JCHP (Jeffrey Charles Henry Peacock), Danica Maier, Gerard Williams, Eleni Zevgaridou and the artists of 'The Cabinet of Ambivalence'. This piece was performed to a live audience on polling day at Speakers Corner in Lincoln 7th May 2015. You can see much more at: <https://thepurdahpress.wordpress.com>
2. **Nick Simpson: Reactions** comprised three different elements: art in the form of a public lecture by British contemporary artist Chris Dobrowolski 'How not to make a living as an artist' performed at General Practice Studios in Lincoln; 'Evening Gold' a radio-controlled floating chair performance on the Brayford by Henry Allen, James Richardson and Catherine Pritchard; and 'Pipe' by James Hubble in which he used coding, Raspberry Pi units and infra red sensors to create interactive experiences with live audiences. You can see much more at: <https://curioreactoins.wordpress.com/author/nicksimp85/>
3. **Yangqing Li: A4 Paper** focused on the power and immediacy of people's direct responses to the idea 'A4 paper' and all fully documented in an installation in St Mary le Wigford, Lincoln. Paper, the invention of Ts'ai Lun in 105AD, has never been a part of our experience and this live art project featured a wide range of creative responses to paper from invited artists, students, friends, teachers, children from a range of backgrounds, cultures and ages. You can see more at: <https://www.facebook.com/events/423811514467457/>



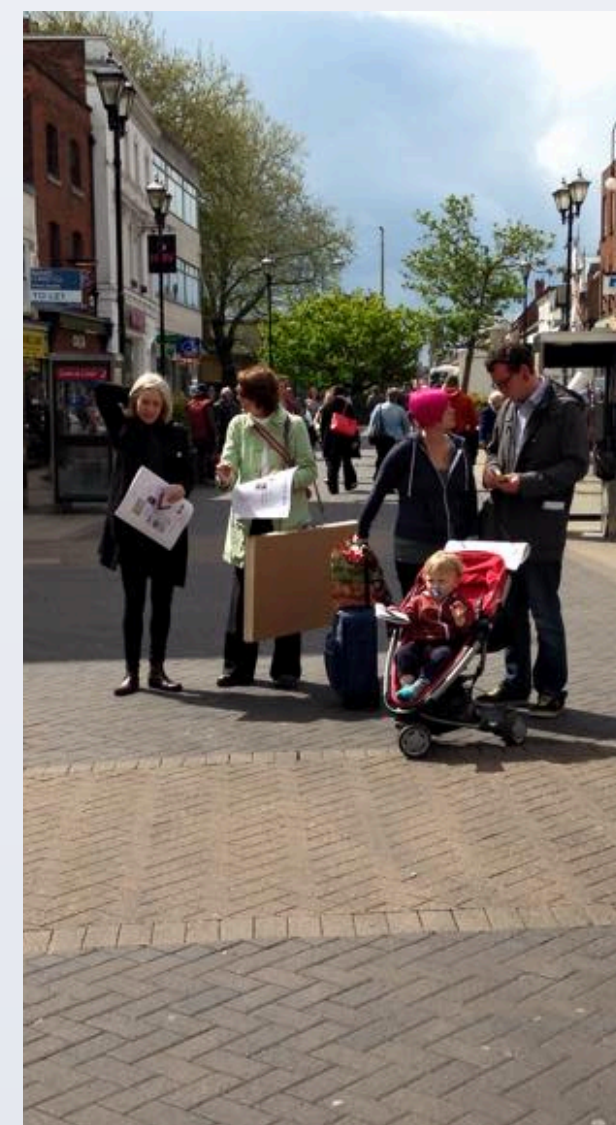
Objectives

The project provides opportunities for students to:

1. Engage in student/staff collaboration and a deepened engagement with the community outside of the campus
2. Curate a public exhibition, organise a preview event and press release
3. Establish a taxonomy of potential source material for further research
4. Produce an interpretation statement contextualising the exhibition (200 words)
5. Develop an understanding of curating an exhibition in non-gallery spaces
6. Develop and apply a framework critical of concepts
7. Evidence your contextual knowledge and your understanding of reflective practice and collaborative working
8. Enhance your experience, knowledge and understanding of professional practice
9. Develop your time-management, team-working, communication, problem-solving, negotiation and networking skills
10. Work with a selected artist from outside the E Midlands region and collaborate with them on ideas, engagement etc
11. Produce a fully documented evaluation of their project as part of the submission

Findings

1. All students involved, although challenged by the project's complexity, felt supported in equal measure and expressed satisfaction at what they achieved in such a short period of time.
2. In total there were five curatorial projects running parallel to one another - three FED projects and existing two projects. This created a real sense of curatorial activity within the city during the month of May and created a growing sense of ambition and critical mass. Two of the projects were hosted by the Collection / Usher, and all attracted good amounts of interest.
3. New audiences were encountered, especially by the three FED projects as they were in non-gallery settings and set about engaging new audiences as part of their strategy.
4. Students had to negotiate new and often unexpected challenges in working in new and changing situations.
5. All students felt they had learned much from the process, they were able to articulate insightful evaluations on their work and keen to undertake similar projects soon.
6. New skills were needed such as management and control, collaboration and negotiation, finance and logistics as well as working with other agencies' deadlines and systems.
7. Curatorial models provide tools such as the curator's dynamic checklist but new skills in flexing management and control as above, were required to deal with newly emergent situations.
8. This also effected the new and existing working relationships.
9. Further projects might include some way of following up in more detail the affect of this new work on individuals and groups.



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